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Citation for published version:

Theodossopoulos, D 2018, 'Nineteenth-century housing preventive conservation in Edinburgh and its Western European context', *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 95-110. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-06-2017-0041>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1108/JCHMSD-06-2017-0041](https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-06-2017-0041)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development

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19th-century housing preventive conservation in Edinburgh and its Western European context

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

This paper explores how comprehensive the management of common repairs in 19th century urban housing in Edinburgh is in the European context. The city experienced a variety of approaches since the 1970s to repairs of exposed decorative elements and the envelope, whose condition is exacerbated by inappropriate interventions and climate change.

Methodology

The debate is framed in practice in W. Europe where economy, administration and conservation cultures have been similar since the 1970s: Glasgow (property manager), Venice (role of housing agency), Flanders (Monumentenwacht's periodical inspections for subscribers), tax incentives (France, Italy, Spain), linking management and procurement (Libretto Casa, Rome), the emerging concept of preventive conservation.

Findings

Edinburgh has a holistic and technically rich management experience, with a strong educational focus, which shows the immense volume of work required, hampered by the fragmentation of ownership and the small size of the repair industry. Practice can improve in Edinburgh and Europe through increased awareness, tax incentives, regular inspections, legal recognition of the need for maintenance and stepping-up the debate at national, European and political level, towards preventive conservation approaches.

Research limitations

The study profited from direct knowledge of the approach in Edinburgh and other areas, but little has been published on each area outside local level, so appraisal depended on language knowledge.

Originality/value

This first reading of practice at European level may be of value to the national agencies referred to, for policy development or European initiatives.

Classification: General review

KEYWORDS: maintenance, common repairs, historical housing, Edinburgh, Georgian architecture, preventive conservation

1 INTRODUCTION

There is a wide debate and growing practice across Europe to make active management of common repairs in 19th century urban housing (i.e. shared among the owners of all the flats) a priority at a par with monumental heritage, shifting towards the concept of planned or preventive conservation (Della Torre 2014, van Balen 2011). The need for such repairs is extensive, concerning decorative elements and the envelope (blocked gutters retaining water and eroding parapets, balustrades and cornices; delaminating stone at windows mullions, eroding stone chimneys, degradation of ashlar stone or plasterwork) or the structure (tying of internal brick or timber stud walls to the external load-bearing walls, settlement) (SCOSS 2006). Climate change and inappropriate repairs have exacerbated these problems, which can have fatal consequences. The emerging concept of preventive conservation aims to expand the value of common repairs by associating them with the more comprehensively planned conservation approaches and exploring the potential for cultural and financial development (della Torre 2014, Vandesande 2017).

The experience in Edinburgh is reviewed here as a benchmark for common repairs management in Europe: the variety and quality of approaches practised for the last 45 years is comprehensive and the city's quite uniform urban heritage (the C18 and C19 Georgian period) may permit even a quantitative approach as common problems can be more easily compared.

Such repairs in Edinburgh have been mainly managed but also financed in various ways by the City Council (through the system of legally enforced statutory notices) or the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWHT), an independent agency that supports owners with funding, exemplary applications and know-how stemming from their long involvement (as an amalgamation of the earlier and separate New Town Conservation Committee and Old Town Renewal Trust). Both bodies have applied technically successful practice, overcoming the fragmentation of ownership and the small size of the repairs industry. Legal duty though makes a major difference: an immense volume of works was statutorily notified by the Council but became impossible to control, causing the system to be transformed radically (Edinburgh Shared Repairs Service), while EWHT support model remains strong and diversified.

It is useful to compare this long engagement with similar efforts across Europe to frame good practice and inform discussion for alternatives in Edinburgh, improving the established principles of centralised recording, control and funding. Several sites (cities or countries) have been chosen in W. Europe as the area represents similarities in economy, local administration and conservation culture with Edinburgh since the movement started in the 1970s. Such similar initiatives have not been reviewed comprehensively together in literature and they are all available as policy documents or home-owners helpline web sites in national languages, so they have been chosen here also according to the ability of the author to read them. It is inevitable some initiatives are not discussed, especially from German-speaking countries and E. Europe, who may have a very distinct system inherited from their previous socialist management of all housing.

The study shows that management elsewhere in Europe is much lighter in these terms and focuses in encouraging owners with incentives. In neighbouring Glasgow for example, due to a different social organisation, owners in tenements pay a maintenance factor so the local Heritage Trust supports property managers, with possibly a more effective quality control. In Venice, there is a mixture of historic public and private housing threatened by continuous abandonment so various Special Acts have funded maintenance and refurbishment of private housing, mostly spent in ground floors repairs. France and other parts of Italy prefer to offer tax benefits to restoration works, and with a limited scope. Rome has had a typological approach to urban rehabilitation by the publication of a "Manuale di recupero", an effort that integrated research.

In Flanders and earlier in the Netherlands, Monumentenwacht was set up as a regional agency to coordinate regular surveys for subscribing private and public owners, with the aim

of this constant control to encourage them to carry out repairs when needed and form more dynamic conservation values.

Finally, this European framework of reference aims to inform the debate for preventive conservation in urban historical housing, reflecting through the extensive experience in Edinburgh on the very essential steps in fabric repairs, financing and coordination/ communication with owners.

2 COMMON PROBLEMS

The fabric of the 18-19th century housing heritage across cities like Edinburgh, Glasgow, Rome, Paris, Madrid etc is characterised by rubble walls of various matrices, plastered or clad in ashlar, with a range of arrangements for their openings and exposed decorative elements (cornices, chimneys, balustrade parapets). Typological analysis around some of these features occasionally give designers and contractors too specific impressions, almost instructions, of how the original feature worked, but has some merits in management terms (Giovanetti 1998). Some very illustrative manuals have been produced for Edinburgh (Davey et al 1986) and many Italian cities like Rome (Manuale 1989) by surveying such features to define dominant and subordinate types, promoting integration with research and analysis, and they have been quite popular. The concept of change is a further current a theme in monuments' administration (Historic Scotland 2011), so including the transformation processes they have gone through is another valuable way to determine such typologies .

Fabric problems (CIRIA 1994, SCOSS 2006) are usually found at:

- Tying between floors and walls, and lateral confinement of gable end walls, which may not have enough redundancies after a floor failure or settlement
- Poor bonding of ashlar to rubble backing or within brickwork
- Low binder strength in very mixed rubble
- Settlement and shallow foundations
- Delaminating stone at window surrounds or bay-window mullions
- Cracked lintels, distorted openings
- Eroded and unstable parapets, balustrades, chimneys, cornices
- Water and thermal tightness of roofs

1919 is a conventional date, set especially in Britain to define traditional vs modern building stock, a date that highlights the move from the traditional craftsmanship processes to professional contractors. The historical building stock particularly in Scotland is about 460,000 dwellings among a total of 2.4M (Scottish Government 2012), of which 40% are tenements (blocks of flats of 3-4 stories), a type and age group that has the highest levels of urgent repairs. In general, 77% of pre-1919 dwellings have some disrepair in their critical external elements (TBHC 2015). Gradual decay is further exacerbated by poor maintenance and adverse environmental conditions due to climate change (sharper contrast in temperatures between summer and winter, heavier rainfall and snowfall).

Various approaches to the management of repairs of such problems will be reviewed in the following section, showing that common problems throughout Europe are Multiple Ownership (which affects the initiation of works and coordination) and funding (access to and management of public funds or tax reliefs available to support the finances of private owners). Costs can be exceptionally high for the owner of each flat, so in some cases an agency was created to coordinate and promote preventive conservation to catch problems at an early stage. It is worthy reviewing Edinburgh as a central case study that has experienced a comprehensive range of problems but also technical and administrative solutions. This will form a platform for the discussion of the European context.

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The management of common repairs has been done in a mainly reactive way since the early 1970's, but this has created great awareness among professionals who currently promote additional initiatives to streamline the process and encourage owners to engage with repairs.

Regarding the process, in Scotland (and broadly in Britain) a register and designation of status is usually the first step, together with the legal definition of the community of private owners (not always in terms of a condominium) and how they deal with repairs in general (ad hoc or through a maintenance factor). Funding has been seen as an essential incentive, so combinations of funding through repayable grants or tax reliefs have been practised in Edinburgh, which has inevitably been conditioned by the volume of the works and ability to control their quality. Preventive approaches are being encouraged mainly by means of manuals and publications showing correct historical details or exemplary practice (Davey et al 1986), occasionally combined with initiatives around the education of professionals and research (Edinburgh Traditional Buildings Forum) or the public (Property Repair & Maintenance Events).

Common repairs are certainly an issue across the entire historical city centre but they have been better coordinated in the 18-19C areas and especially the conservation areas or the World Heritage zone. The New Town (1770-1895) was built to a quite consistent fabric specification in local sandstone, where a rubble wall is clad in finer or ashlar stone (often the high quality Craigleith free stone), and is characterised by the restrained classicism and decorative elements of housing blocks and public buildings. The management of common repairs in tenements is an on-going technical and social problem due to the lack of experienced stone contractors and high costs to be shared among owners. Problems are often repetitive (Fig. 1), manifesting in eroded ashlar elevations, decaying roof elements (cornices, balustrades, parapets, chimneys), distorted openings etc.



Figure 1 Damaged balustrade and cornice in Glencairn Crescent, Edinburgh (2014)

Scotland is projected to experience increasing average temperatures throughout the year, an increase in average rainfall in winter linked with a decrease in summer and rising sea levels. (CCRA 2012). More water in the atmosphere and highly variable temperatures will accelerate decay that is already affecting the durability and stability of the stonework of 19th century tenements, both the units and their connections (mortar, metal pins). This is manifested at blocked gutters retaining water at the parapets and cornices; delaminating stone at windows or bay-window mullions; stone chimneys further corroding as more of the acids from the ashes dissolve into their masonry ducts. Ultimately, inappropriate or fragmented repairs accelerate these phenomena, often with fatal consequences like the fall of the coping stones at the gable end above Ryan's Bar in the West End in June 2000.

The city's problems have been highlighted as early as in the 1960's, through some earlier failures of low-quality housing (or slums, like the "Penny Tenement" collapse in Beaumont Place, Holyrood Park in November 1959), the severe storms of 1966, the realisation of the scale of the problems (11,000 properties) and abandonment of the city centre, but also the advancement of some aggressive projects (the demolition of George Square, the plans of an inner ring road, demolition of tenements in Jamaica Street). In response to this perceived crisis, the influential architect Robert Matthew was instrumental in the establishment of the Edinburgh New Town Conservation Committee (ENTCC) in December 1970 with Desmond Hodges as the first director (EWHT 2012, Hodges and Knight 2011). A combination of pilot projects along the fringes of the New Town, Government and Council grants to home owners (repayable on the sale or transfer of the building) and encouragement of a sense of pride produced more than 1,200 repair projects. The success of the scheme led to the amalgamation with the Old Town Renewal Trust in 1999 (instigated by the designation of the city as World Heritage site), forming the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWHT) for a more effective and extensive application of the scheme.

Grants and loans have been a very positive tool to promote action on common repairs on both unlisted and listed buildings, and these grants were available together with Housing Repair Grants and Scottish Development Dept, (SDD, later Historic Scotland) top up funding for stone repairs. Housing Repair Grants had also a positive contribution in the 1980s as they could finance up to 90% in certain relatively low limits and led to a significant amount of work that allowed building professionals and contractors to develop skills in common repair work.

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC - municipality) on the other hand has unique powers that stem from the 1991 "City of Edinburgh District Council Order Confirmation Act" (or Edinburgh Act). Statutory Notices according to the following articles of the Act can be served to private owners enforcing shared (or common) repairs for defects which may be a risk to public safety or health.

"24: when the structure of part of any building or anything affixed to any building has become insecure, worn out, or damaged or is in need of repair, the Council may, by notice, require the owner of such building to execute any works necessary for securing, restoring or repairing such structure, fixture"

"27.2: Every owner of every such part of such building shall be liable in equal shares to the Council for any expense incurred by the Council in executing any works."

The process of Statutory Notices (see CEC 2014 for a summary) was managed by the Property Conservation dept. and went through a request for service, survey and estimate of costs, followed by an Emergency or Open Notice to the owners; 28 days were then given for owners to make their arrangements; the Repairs Panel would reach a decision and the project would be undertaken by private contractors, always supervised by the Council surveyors. Repairs would be paid by a loan from the Council, repayable only when the property was sold.

In a way however, the system fell victim of its own success: it created a sheer volume of works with high expectation of Council intervention. The city's population (about 450,000) live in 215,000 units, 55% of which are flats (118,250 units actually situated in around 14,800 buildings). The Scottish House Condition Survey of 2002 identified in Edinburgh 167,000 properties in state of disrepair, with 60,000 in urgent state. Repair cost for private sector was assessed to £758m in 2007, with patch (emergency) repairs at £158m.

In this context it is not surprising that in 2011 the Council had 3,000 outstanding Statutory Notices (for 35,000 individuals), out of which 1,800 Emergency Notices, to a value of £32M (CEC 2014). Moreover, in many cases the conditional surveys that followed the initial ones increased significantly the extent and cost of repairs, causing widespread discontent for the system. The scheme became impossible to control financially (repayment of loans) and in terms of quality, and collapsed in 2013. The Edinburgh Act however is still effective and provides together with the broader Tenements (Scotland) Act of 2004 the framework for the Council's current "Shared Repairs Service" (http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20123/shared_repairs),

which offers owners advice to help them understand their shared responsibilities in their property, and encourage them to be proactive with maintenance and repairs.

EWHT on the other hand continues offering grants and positive advice to home-owners through exemplary projects and publications of its own good practice. In the financial year 2013-14 for example, EWHT awarded £179,384 in grants, generating at the same time an investment of £971,563 (EWHT 2013). Such grants cover repairs on chimneys, balustrades, stairs etc but the most emblematic projects have been extensive or complete façade replacements (Hyslop 2004), like

- 23 Fettes Row: the first, emblematic ENTCC project, involving the refacing of the entire rusticated north façade in 1975, which halted demolition in the rest of the street
- Hillside Crescent: a mixture of chemical cleaning, which showed the problems of the method and is avoided since
- 10-14 St. Vincent St.: entire replacement and soiling in 1995
- 16-18 St. Vincent St. (1977)
- Partial façade replacement in 91-95 Hannover Street (ground floor, 1976), Gayfield Place (resulting in visual contrast against original soiled masonry, 1983)
- Repairs mainly on decorative elements in 3-13 Carlton St. (balustrades and discolouration, 1982), 2 Grosvenor Cr. (chimney, balustrades, indents, 1985), 29 Ann Street (carved pilaster capital in recycled Craigleith stone, 1989).

An example of comprehensive and extensive stone repairs that combined the forces of the Council and EWHT is Montgomery & Windsor Street (Fig. 2), carried out by Hypostyle Architects (project architect Jo Parry). The corner tenement is a significant witness of William Playfair's plans for his Eastern New Town Scheme, materialised mostly after his death. Stone fall incidents prompted the owners to seek help and significant stone repairs were required. The value of the restoration project was about £800,000, which was shared to £30,000 among each owner, a substantial investment, and EWHT supported the project with a 25% loan. The project (2007-09) carried out the rebuilding of both gables, extensive repairs and stone replacement to the elevations, and roof repairs, including the reinstatement of the octagonal chimney profiles and copes to Playfair's original design allowing the building's original aesthetic integrity to be restored.



Figure 2. Repairs in Montgomery & Windsor Street, Edinburgh

In 25 Learmonth Terrace, EWHT made a repayable grant of £290,381 under their Conservation Funding Programme to conserve the exterior (repairs to facing stonework, slate, balustrades, cast-iron gutters and downpipes), lasting around 8 months. Projects are not always of

that scale and unfortunately it is unlikely that in uncertain financial climates (2017) such funding may become easily available.

Such projects cover unfortunately only a portion of the city's Georgian stock and have to be carefully selected. They are though associated with quality and are viewed by professionals and the public as positive examples of how repairs can be done and even combined with more ambitious conservation projects. A further educational contribution of ENTCC in this direction has been the publication of the "Care and conservation of Georgian houses" (Davey et al 1986), a manual containing standard details and recommendations for repairs across the full range of elements that characterise the neoclassical housing building stock in Edinburgh (Fig. 3).

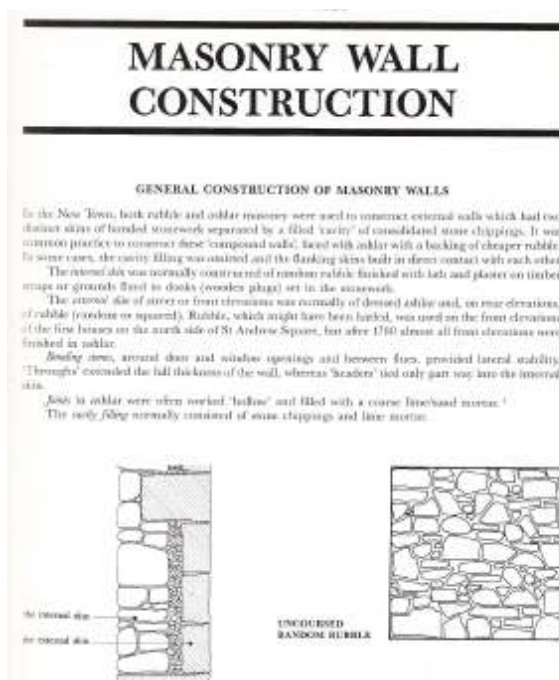


Figure 3. A page from the "Care and Conservation" manual for Edinburgh (Davey et al 1986)

4 OTHER EXPERIENCES IN BRITAIN

4.1 Scotland

It is worthy referring Edinburgh to the wider context of Scotland due to its strong urban tradition in tenements housing and consequently their management. Due to this experience, there are many sources of support, like guidance and agencies, financing schemes, management legislation, or informative registers like Canmore (<https://canmore.org.uk/>) and the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR <http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/>).

More operative guidance compared to "Care and Conservation" has been deemed necessary so the Tenements Handbook (Under One Roof 2017) was created, a popular web site that explains all the essential steps in maintenance repairs, highlighting not only best practice in a straightforward format but also essential financial and legal aspects that often owners find daunting.

In tenements of all ages, maintenance is expected to be run by a Property Manager (Factor), a scheme now regulated by a 2011 Act (Under One Roof 2017). This can be a private agent, a firm or even a housing association. The benefits of the scheme have become evident in cases of absentee landlords, as it provides details of all owners at the planning of repairs (and shares of the costs), and eventually one single bank account for payment, which is vital for the professionals and contractors involved. For further repayment security, provision for owners unable to pay their costs (missing shares) has been made under the 2004 Tenements Act and also

currently (2017) in Edinburgh, giving local authorities a discretionary power to pay such shares and have them refunded at the sale of the property.

Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THI) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) are other scheme in Scotland that are awarded to local authorities or community groups for conservation and regeneration activities. They can support façade replacements, repairs shopfront renovation etc by providing up to 70% funding of costs and they have been effective, but they are quite specific on emblematic High Street or conservation areas, and the fact is that large parts of historical cities lie beyond such areas.

4.2 *Glasgow*

Common repairs are supported by the Glasgow City Heritage Trust (GCHT <http://glasgowheritage.org.uk/>), an independent charity supported by Glasgow City Council and Historic Scotland. Similar to EWHT, they provide Building Repair Grants for repair and conservation; help and advice to private owners; and Heritage Grants to support education and skills training. Properties are eligible for assistance if they are within designated conservation areas (Central, East Pollokshields, Shawlands or Walmer Crescent). £225,000 for grants has been awarded since GCHT was founded in 2007 (GCHT 2017).

Glasgow has a different background to Edinburgh as maintenance is much more broadly run by Factors. This is the result of the city's very different dynamics in social housing, as also the fact that until recently entire tenements had a single owner. The Council on the other hand has no statutory powers, which makes common repairs a matter of private initiative when a problem arises or during conservation works. However, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 wants to ensure owners keep properties in good condition, therefore Glasgow City Council can issue a Maintenance Order forcing them to carry out repairs. The Council and GCHT in this context encourage owners to set up a maintenance plan for routine annual checks.

Similarly to ENTCC, Glasgow Conservation Trust West, a predecessor of GCHT, published the "West End Conservation Manual", for the use of professionals and owners. More limited in scope than the Edinburgh one, the manual includes sections on many technical aspects of the load-bearing fabric and the interior of buildings, as also conservation issues in parks and streetscapes.

4.3 *Maintenance in England: MAINTAIN and Bath*

A private initiative was set up in Bath in 1998 trying to adapt the successful practice of regular inspections promoted by the Monumentenwacht schemes in the Netherlands and Belgium (see later section). Maintain our Heritage (MAINTAIN) produced a report on best practice management for individual owners and commercial services (Putting it off 2003) and aimed to incentivise inspections in England, by running a pilot scheme in Bath in 2002-3 (Dann 2003, <http://www.maintainourheritage.co.uk/pilot.htm>). This scheme subsidised condition reports up to 70%, and was successful as it registered a 30% uptake among Bath owners and produced useful statistics on the needs for repairs. Once again the crux of the problem was found to be the attitudes of owners, which are not pro-active regarding maintenance and would not always seek for advice from experienced professionals.

Despite raising interest, since 2005 Bath Council does not provide grants for repair. The usual recommendation for owners of listed properties is to apply for grants directly to English Heritage (the national heritage agency), which however moves support away from maintenance and repairs towards a conservation project.

Successful and consistent practice on maintenance can be found on the other hand at a different scale, the estates of historical property owned by the Church of England, Church of Scotland or the National Trust (England). Grants managed by the Church are allocated to individual parishes or cathedrals, while the National Trust controls through a central building committee the maintenance of their diverse properties.

4.4 Tax incentives

Reliefs in taxation (VAT Value Added Tax) often function in Britain as an incentive for certain business but so far have not worked for repairs (<http://ihb-online.co.uk/newsarchive/?p=7096>). Only new works to listed buildings, which have received Listed Building Consent (and not all historical housing falls in this category) may be eligible for refunding. Works of maintenance or repair are not normally eligible, 20% tax applies and they do not require LBC. This includes even repointing of external masonry walls. There are many initiatives to redefine VAT exemptions for repairs (IHBC 2014), but they have to counteract the government's position that the state should not subsidise something which is an owner's responsibility.

5 ITALY

Moving to the rest of Europe, it is worthy discussing approaches in Italy, the country with the longest register of listed buildings, ancient monuments and sites of international importance in the world. There is a wide variety of legislation and development of pioneering concepts like landscape conservation. An essential first step in conservation is the legal definition of all types of interventions and Law 475 of 1978 distinguishes between ordinary maintenance (repair and renovation of finishings and services); extraordinary repairs (including the fabric); restoration (the previous levels plus a more systematic approach to the structure and architectural forms to include major elements); building restructuring; urban interventions.

A relief of 36% on income tax (IRPEF) applies for building restructuring up to 48,000 euros per property (http://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/wps/file/Nsilib/Nsi/Agenzia/Agenzia+comunica/Prodotti+editoriali/Guide+Fiscali/Agenzia+informa/pdf+guide+agenzia+informa/Guida_Ristrutturazioni_edilizie.pdf). More recently, extra discounts were added, like 50% for the period June 2012 to December 2015 and 65% for seismic protection works (August 2013- December 2015), a scheme that demonstrated its value in the recent earthquakes in the Abruzzo (L'Aquila) and Emilia Romagna regions. Further support exists for owners who plan energy efficiency renovations. In general, VAT (IVA) is at 10% for professional services for ordinary and extraordinary maintenance on private property.

The government (as established by the *Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio* of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage) can also make direct contributions to projects selected by the Soprintendenze, with the key condition that the sites become accessible to the public (art. 38). Such contributions can be either on capital costs (art. 36), partially or in total, or the interests in authorised loans (art. 37). Particular aspects of management and funding will be studied in two major historical cities, Venice and Rome.

5.1 Venice

Currently common repairs and conservation of minor heritage (*edilizia minore*) is operated by Insula spa, a company owned by a group headed by the City of Venice council (Theodossopoulos 2016). Its current form dates from 2009, when earlier companies were streamlined like Edilvenezia founded on the basis of special laws for Venice (Legge 1984, 1992) to coordinate the conservation of private heritage, control quality and manage finance. Significant funding became available from these laws and several buildings had their external fabric and common elements (roofs, foundations, drainage) repaired, clearly excluding internal interventions, with the condition on the owners to carry on with the maintenance of their property.

Interventions were mainly on public buildings and conversions, rather than maintenance. Projects include for example the refurbishment of 3 houses in Campiello del Piovan (Castello) at a cost of 247,000 euros (1994), the creation of new apartments through the structural

strengthening of the area of Fregnan (38 new units at a cost of 3M euros in 1998) or the conversion of the ex Ice Factory (23 flats at 1.7M euros in 1995), all in the Giudecca area, by Studio Pastor (Insula 2015).

This funding however has run its course, so several initiatives were promoted through Parliament, like the White Paper (*Disegno Legge Speciale*) 2487 that aims to ensure that local authorities in the Laguna have set up a special fund for preventive conservation and maintenance (Legge Speciale, 2015).

5.2 Rome

One of the most ancient cities in Europe with continuous occupation, the issues regarding historical private housing can be summarised by the fact that more than 70% of houses are more than 50 years old. The tragic collapse without a notice of a block in Via di Vigna Jacobini on 16 December 1998, caused 27 fatalities and highlighted the vulnerability of the housing fabric.

In a reaction similar to Edinburgh (Ryan's Bar) and in line with broader initiatives by local authorities in the Lazio region to ensure the safety of their urban housing stock, the City of Rome attempted in 2004 to introduce a degree of control through the "*Fascicolo di Fabbricato*" (Building Book or *libretto casa*): every building in the district would keep a record of all major works in the fabric or the services, so that the safety of the building and its inhabitants could be monitored (<http://www.architettilroma.it/quaderni/fascicolo/rassegna/>). This would include the original project, any building warrants, a condition survey at the time of creation of the Book, notes on any defects, their repair and evolution, services certificates etc.

However, the State Council (*Consiglio di Stato*) with its decision no. 1305 of 28 March 2008 essentially blocked the scheme as it was judged that the complexity and length of information required would make it unfeasible and legally untenable in a case of appeal. This was a setback into a process that had the potential of a global control on safety and planning of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance. The decision did not cancel however the scheme, which is voluntary, but no statistics are available to assess its acceptance.

The *fascicolo* appears to be common practice in new construction in Italy and has become essentially a summary of the design specifications in contractual documents (*capitolato*). In this context, a Building Book could be created for new conservation projects that are conducted through a building contract of any suitable type. An associated development for example is that a version of this scheme was implemented in 2016 in Calabria, another Italian region, linked with their Piano Casa to improve seismic resistance of existing or new properties. Rome also has attempted to apply the scheme to non-historical public housing, through the efforts of ATER Roma (Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale pubblica), their public housing agency.

Regarding financial help, in addition to the nationally applied relief on income tax and VAT, Rome offers exemption from Cosap (*Canone Occupazione Spazi e Aree Pubbliche*), the council tax on occupation of public spaces, to works on the refurbishment of elevations, plus further relief regarding publicity on the formwork.

Finally, an important long-term initiative in Rome and a few other cities (Palermo, Citta di Castello, Siena, Pretoro, Saluzzo) is the publication of the *Manuale del Recupero* (1989). Similar to "Care and Conservation", it is a collection of carefully drawn examples of original construction details, often distinguishing between periods or typologies. According to the authors, apart from providing direct technical advice as a result of scientific research, the focus was to enhance engagement with preservation among the public and private owners rather the administration, experienced professionals or academics, as happens usually. Historic centres are viewed to be managed as groups of separate buildings with common transformations, rather than single units with their unique characteristics (Giovanetti 1998). Quality of research and illustrations has been key for the success of such initiatives, and it was achieved through long-term collaborations with academia.

6 FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

6.1 France

So far, mainly financial incentives characterise the major countries or cities. Levels of control and support in France combine some of the tools seen in Italy and Edinburgh, usually financed and audited by ANAH (*Agence Nationale de l'Habitat*), the national housing agency. Modest repairs and refurbishment of properties in an unhealthy state can be financed as part of urban regeneration (OPAH-RU). Major issues of H&S for the inhabitants and the public (*résorption de l'habitat insalubre - RHI*) are addressed by a sort of statutory notices (*opérations de restauration immobilière - ORI*) or public acquisition and refurbishment of dangerous buildings, as part of the THIRORI scheme (*lutte contre l'habitat indigne* – decayed housing), both established in 1994 when the 1962 “Malraux” tax scheme was re-evaluated (ANAH 2010), actually reducing the original tax reliefs. Currently (2016) these amount to 30% for a total cost up to 100K euros, reducing to 22% for projects in Conservation Areas (*Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural Urbain et Paysage (ZPPAUP)*).

ORI type of projects include refurbishment of chimneys, together with accessibility adaptation of buildings by addressing barriers like walls, partitions, doors frames, pavements, projections and thresholds, floor coverings, lighting, ramps etc. For public acquisitions of buildings with major problems under THIRORI, ANAH can finance up to 50% of the works, including fees, relocation expenses, land acquisition, demolition, refurbishment and contractors. Beneficiaries include wider community groups and public building societies, who will be evaluated in terms of the new use they will provide, the need for public finance as also whether their project fits any conservation schemes of the area or the local policies against decayed housing.

6.2 Madrid

In Spain, the Plan for Housing Rehabilitation (*Plan Estatal de Vivienda y Rehabilitación*) is focused more on the quality of inhabitants' life rather than the preservation of individual buildings, while conservation is carried out at an urban scale. The RENOVE scheme for example finances habitability, accessibility and removal of barriers, services upgrade or energy efficiency.

Zooming into a specific area, the *Comunidad de Madrid* (regional authority) offered through their *Plan de Rehabilitación 2009 – 2012* various types of support for the rehabilitation of houses that are not part of a Conservation Area (*ámbitos de rehabilitación integrada o preferente*) – the latter having different funding streams. This is in the form of grants or loans for individual apartments or the condominium and cover 20 -25% of the budget. Such projects address the embellishment of the exterior (25% for up to 6,000 euros), improvement of the function of elements and communal areas regarding safety, accessibility, insertion of lifts, healthy living, reduction of CO₂ emissions.

7 PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

7.1 Concept

Direct participation of owners and the public has been encouraged in the current conservation trends (article 12, Burra Charter) and promoted (condition surveys) at the draft European Standard CEN/TC 346 Conservation of cultural property. Subsequently, preventive or planned conservation stems from a realisation, especially in Italy, that conservation (*restauro*) is not the only instrument to preserve heritage (de la Torre 2014). The concept also places central role to the very moments of inspection and intervention, which do provide information and sensitivity on the values of the monument. Furthermore, Van Balen (2011) identifies the different benefits of direct (intervention) and indirect preventive conservation (social awareness and capacity). The concept updates effectively the onstart of conservation in the methodological moment of

the recognition of a building as monument or work of art, stipulated by Cesare Brandi in 1965 (Theodossopoulos 2013).

Various tools and practices have been proposed so far, with more emphasis into areas of cultural significance that can become drivers of development, probing innovative management strategies, like the Cultural Districts (Distretti Culturali DC) proposed for the Monza and Brianza province in Italy (de la Torre 2014), where specific monuments were chosen for their potential as cultural and financial development catalysts. A broader discussion of the development potential of preventive conservation is outlined by Vandesande (2017)

7.2 Monumentenwacht, Flanders and the Netherlands

Monumentenwacht Vlaanderen is a “federation” of local chapters linked directly with the five Flemish provinces, set up in 1991. It is a private agency, working at the intermediate public administration level between the Flemish Government and the municipalities, responding to the duty of care traditionally expected by the latter and helping building owners to act on their legal obligations enforced by the Flemish Government regarding listed buildings maintenance (<http://www.monumentenwacht.be/>, Vandesande 2017). The scheme follows, refocuses and reinvestigates the scheme established in 1973 in the Netherlands (<https://www.monumenten.nl/onderhoud-en-restauratie/monumentenwacht>).

Like EWHT and GCHT, the agency works directly with communities and individuals, empowering them and creating a strong social platform for heritage policy, further supporting them with publications and technical advice. Its agenda and actions are also driven by the PRE-COMOS research network at RLICC in KU Leuven (van Balen 2011), around the social and economic dimensions of preventive conservation.

The agency has voluntary membership (currently at 5,000) of public authorities, church communities and individual owners. They pay a subscription that provides them with discounted regular condition surveys (exterior and interior), very minor repairs during inspection, detailed documentation and discussion of the condition, maintenance planning and costs. Their advice has helped owners understand what intervention may be required and avoid unnecessary actions on original fabric, which is the essence of “preventive” conservation well before restoration may become necessary. Funding comes from the local authorities involved and the subscription and inspections fees, and Monumentenwacht is not involved in the repairs themselves.

7.3 Traditional Buildings Health Check Scheme, Stirling

An initiative in Scotland that may be in the right direction of engaging owners is the Traditional Buildings Health Check Scheme in Stirling (TBHC <http://traditionalbuildingshealthcheck.org/>). Similarly to Monumentenwacht, it is a proactive, membership scheme to encourage the maintenance of traditional properties within the Stirling City boundary. Membership in the 5-year pilot scheme (2013-18) offers access to maintenance and repair advice from TBHC and an impartial building inspection service. The 2016 review (communication with Richard Groom) showed its benefits to the local traditional building stock and trade: over 200 members and 116 buildings inspected, of which 50% have been maintained /repaired producing £900,000 of private investment, making the best use of the public funding invested to the pilot project. Overall, very positive feedback was recorded from members with 93% being ‘more than satisfied’.

8 REFLECTIONS FOR EDINBURGH

This review is certainly not complete as more approaches have to be explored in other countries (for example Germany) or areas with different housing management history (E. Europe)

. It was shown though that no area has a comprehensive approach as Edinburgh's, but partial aspects of that are usually practised by local authorities.

Most areas seem to offer a valuable service through funding and development policy, but they do not aim to address the volume of common repairs as in Edinburgh. It is true though that the Edinburgh statutory framework collapsed under its own weight and became unworkable without sufficient resourcing and tight management. The critique by the Edinburgh Conveyancers' Forum (ECF 2013) confirms what is known among professionals, that scale and disengagement of the owners (even ignorance) are the main problems, which are likely to increase in the future. Essential repairs when public safety is at risk should however continue to be compulsory and local authorities must find mechanisms to enforce them. Almost all authorities appear reluctant to apply such extensive control or even seek compulsory acquisition of a property that is vacant and dangerous. The consensus is therefore that good practice should be shared among owners to encourage them to take feasible decisions.

When public funds are available, a lot can be achieved as the work of EWHT/ ENTCC and Insula spc showed, otherwise the usual practice is tax relief. The targeted projects by EWHT cannot be unfortunately of the scale of the past, but the diversity sought (shopfronts, decoration) are in line with the funding available and the political agenda for community value. In the current financial climate public funding will not improve, but the new Edinburgh Shared Repairs Service promises a better handling of repayment of repairs or the shares missing among tenement owners.

To provide proper, legally sound control but also positive support, local authorities have to be properly equipped, but Edinburgh and Rome showed how complex this is. Public supported agencies like EWHT or community groups with robust structure and decision-making processes should be empowered. The 2015 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act and the 2011 Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) are making progressive efforts in this direction, quite unique in Europe, by encouraging community ownership of land and buildings, and strengthening their voices in strategic decisions.

Community spirit should be nourished among owners in tenements (possibly by formalising condominiums like in Glasgow), and regular inspections through Monument-Watch schemes have shown to improve sensitivity and engagement. Improved regulation of inspections can result eventually, which was one of the arguments that caused the collapse of the previous Edinburgh Council service. Preventive conservation however may still have to work for Edinburgh, as professionals demonstrate that even after long and expensive projects the mentality of owners towards maintenance has not changed. Tenements in Gayfield Square and Nelson Street are examples where quinquennial inspections happen and should be shared as examples of good practice, while TBHC can show its potential for the city.

The similarity of technical problems prompts whether economies of scale can be explored by developing solutions for many properties during a single project. This approach appears as an opportunity to detect and manage systematically a range of water-related problems affecting integrity of stone blocks or their connections. Common repairs across many properties could be then awarded as a single contract, which will enable systematic application of good practice and ultimately contribute to sustainable business for stone contractors who want to specialise in traditional skills and keep continuity through apprenticeship.

A consequence of raising the scale of business could be that the current need for common repairs can be evaluated and action planned in the style of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Scotland State of the Nation Infrastructure report (2015). The production of a strategic document on the economic performance of traditional (pre-1919) housing in the prospect of climate change and continuous lack of initiative by owners can be promoted by the Scottish Government and empower local authorities to set priorities and pilot projects, pump-priming the repair industry and highlighting the benefits of positive action. The scale of such initiatives could step-up awareness among owners.

Finally, tax reliefs and their link to regular inspections should not be underestimated, for owners and contractors. The volume of work is such that may become a crisis, which makes

the UK government's argument for owners' responsibility unattainable. The flexible regime in Italy and France could be diversified according to budget levels in the UK to empower owners to plan repairs and employ experienced professionals. Madrid shows it would have to be specifically targeted though to homes outside conservation areas or not listed, who receive other support, so that the benefits can be maximised and become feasible for the government.

9 CONCLUSION

A variety of practices exist across Europe to encourage and support owners in the maintenance and repair of historical (pre-1919) housing, ranging from full range of control, to targeted schemes, voluntary inspections and tax reliefs, always depending on the availability of public funding. Policies for maintenance appear quite partial and local, so raising awareness among the public and mapping the extent of the problem should make the case for political initiatives at national levels. Edinburgh is an example for priorities but also limitations of stronger initiatives by the local authorities and the potential of sharing good practice and education. The city is a unique case in Europe where all these aspects have been combined, tested and developed further, and deserves stronger dissemination.

Many schemes across Europe agree on the active involvement of the owners, which has to be nurtured, otherwise it is overwhelming for the public administration or contrary to their remit to fully "orchestrate" them. There is no single European practice either, but tax incentives or loans, education, focus outside conservation areas are broadly the approaches, as also the case for preventive conservation through its development potential or voluntary subscription schemes for regular inspections. Governments have to face common repairs as a problem of equal importance to monuments conservation and get the message through with policies and funding, especially within the incoming framework of European standard CEN/TC 346. Other initiatives like networks of agencies may allow such experience to be shared among similar European cities, like EWHT's participation at the European Regional Development funded <http://atlanticarea.eu/>. Overall, Edinburgh's extensive experience should inform the European debate, in a contemporary way to expand the research and education potential of historic architecture into conservation, beyond what has been achieved already with the Scottish or Italian Manuals.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following colleagues and friends are warmly thanked for their insight to cases and practices from their own areas: Fiona Macdonald and Krzysztof Chukra (conservation architects at EWHT), Jo Parry (architect at Hypostyle Architects), the Tenement Action Group, Georgina Allison (architect in Edinburgh), Euan Leitch (director, Built Environment Forum Scotland), Jocelyn Cunliffe (architect with Gray Marshall & Associates), Luc Verpoest (chair of Monumentenwacht Vlaanders), Dr. Aziliz Vandesande (KU Leuven), Dr. Simona Salvo and Chiara Andreotti (Sapienza University), Richard Groom (Traditional Buildings Health Check), Dr. Alberto Viskovic (University of Chieti-Pescara), Pierpaolo Campostrini and Chiara Dall'Angelo (CORILA, Venice), Dr. Claudia Bolgia (University of Edinburgh), Bertrand Nicolle (Ordre des architectes d'Île-de-France), Rossella Moioli (conservation architect, Monza).

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